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RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD PRIORITY 0605
RUEHKV/AMEMBASSY KYIV PRIORITY 0143
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RUEHSI/AMEMBASSY TBILISI PRIORITY 5629
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SUBJECT: GEORGIAN NATO MISSION STATEMENT ON SITUATION IN
SOUTH OSSETIA

¶1. (SBU) On August 8, the Georgian Mission to NATO distributed the following statement to Allies:

Statement of the Government of Georgia regarding the situation in the South Ossetia region of Georgia

Over the last several hours, separatist rebels in South Ossetia have undertaken a series of military attacks against unarmed civilians and peacekeeping forces in several villages near Tskhinvali. Their actions constitute an extreme escalation of an already dangerous situation.

These latest attacks took place after President Mikheil Saakashvili announced a unilateral ceasefire by Georgia and appealed for peace talks.

The separatist rebels, in defiance of this call, subsequently attacked several villages near Tskhinvali. On August 7, at 22:30 local time, they attacked the village of Prisi, which was followed one hour later by an attack on the village of Tamarasheni. Civilians and peacekeepers came under massive shelling. The attacks resulted in several dead and wounded.

According to available data, hundred of armed personnel and heavy military equipment have crossed from Russia to Georgia through the Roki tunnel.

To protect peaceful civilian populations and to prevent further military attacks, the Government of Georgia has been forced to take adequate measures.

Despite this most recent escalation, the Government of Georgia once again reiterates its readiness to immediately begin peace talks aimed at resolving the conflict in South Ossetia and calls on the separatist rebels to cease their military actions and come to the negotiation table.

08.08.2008

END TEXT

¶2. (SBU) The Georgian Mission attached additional information to the statement, including the text of a special address of the President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili. We have e-mail this additional information to EUR/RPM.

WEINROD